JAN 26 1965

DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

Vol. XIII No. 21 November 27th 1964 Price: 15 Pf, 5c, 3d.

100 EVERY DAY . . .

. . . Dragged into Bonn Persecution Net

Every day of the year, some 100 West German men and women are dragged into the system of political persecution in West Germany. Their homes are searched, they are black-listed by employers, they are subjected to lengthy police interrogations.

The "offences" which lead to such persecution, but only in a minority of cases to court action or prison terms, include visits to ailing relatives in the German Democratic Republic, visiting Youth Festivals as press photographer, acting as election agents for unorthodox parliamentary candidates, or publicly espousing political aims which happen to run parallel to Communist targets.

All these facts were reported on November 9th in a sensational exposure screened by the West German television service. The report formed part of a regular fortnightly magazine programme "Panorama", which has frequently been under fire by the West German Establishment for espousing liberal causes. Dr Eugen Kogon, who has run the programme for the past year, is a survivor of Buchenwald concentration camp. After the Panorama exposure of political persecution, none of the facts given in which were disputed by the authorities, it was announced that Dr Kogon would be "leaving" the programme at the end of this year. It was not known whether there was any connection between the two events.

In past years GERMAN REPORT has frequently reported on various aspects of "political justice" in West Germany, ranging from the high proportion of nazi judges still in office to the sentences passed and the various harrassments inflicted on persons involved in progressive political activities.

This unusual West German TV programme is such an unassailable indictment of the theory and practice of political persecution that we reprint the script of the programme below. A couple of paragraphs have been shortened to make them easier to understand; a few references perhaps obscure outside Germany have been explained in brackets; otherwise the text is a direct and uncut translation of the German original.

Introducing the programme, Dr Eugen Kogon stated that the Cold War had left behind in West Germany some symptoms, particularly in the field of political prosecutions, which could have lasting effects if they were not dealt with soon. West Germans who paid normal visits to the German Democratic Republic might suddenly find themselves accused on their return of "actions endangering the West German state". Lutz Lehmann, "Panorama" reporter, had investigated this sorry aspect of contemporory reality in the German Federal Republic.

Reporter: On February 1st this year, Heinz Renner was buried with full ceremonies in Essen. Heinz Renner was a Communist, a Communist who, as a funeral speaker said, had given great services to the city of Essen as a city councillor since 1922. The city of Essen laid a wreath on his grave.

After the war, Renner was the first Lord Mayor of Essen, and initiated the reconstruction work. Then he joined the cabinet of North-Rhine-Westphalia, together with such men as Dr Heinrich Lübke (today West German President, ed.).

Messages of condolence on Renner's death were received from Konrad Adenauer (and other leading West German politicians of all parties, ed.). Bishop Hengsbach wrote: "What Renner did, in full conviction, for the welfare of his fellow man, will not be forgotten by God".

In 1958, two years after the Communist Party of Germany had been banned, Renner ran for office for the last time. With the approval of the local electoral commission he ran as independent candidate for the Provincial Parliament. The provincial electoral commission intervened; his election posters were torn down, and the man who acted as his election agent was convicted by the courts in 1963. I would like to ask you, Herr Ernst Schmidt, why you were convicted?

Schmidt: Firstly because I had given electoral help to former Lord Mayor Heinz Renner, and secondly because I had published a magazine entitled "Ruhrbote". The court was not able to show that I had offended against any law, or that my magazine was "dangerous to the state". But I had been an official of the Commu-

STOP PRESS – More Nazi Judges

Research in old nazi files in the German Democratic Republic has just brought to light new details of war-time crimes committed by judges and prosecutors who today hold high posts in the West German courts. Full details of the newly-discovered sensational documents will be given in the next issue of GERMAN REPORT.

nist Party before it was banned, and the court decided that everything I had done since the ban had been on the orders of the banned party. This was regarded as an infringement of the ban imposed by the Federal Constitutional Court, and for this reason I shall have to go to prison for 15 months if the petition for pardon submitted by a number of prominent Essen citizens is not successful.

Reporter: Pastor Lochert, together with other leading Essen citizens you have directed a pardon petition to the provincial minister of justice. Why are you taking this action in favour of Herr Schmidt?

Pastor Lochert: We have all known Ernst Schmidt for many years as an honest, respectable and tolerant man. He has served on the parent-teacher committee and so on. I cannot understand that a man like this should be relegated to the rank of second-class citizen just because he has different political opinions... Is our democracy really so weak that a man with Communist ideas, even if he has not been active as a Communist for some years, should be put behind bars? I cannot regard this as a service to democracy.

Reporter: If the pardon petition is unsuccessful, then Ernst Schmidt will have to spend 15 months in prison, locked up like all political prisoners with common criminals. How many political prisoners are there in West Germany? According to the Ministry of Justice there were 140 last summer, but defence lawyers regard this figure as too low.

Another man who has been sentenced to political imprisonment is Klaus Rose.

You are 27, Herr Rose. Once in the past you were imprisoned for four weeks. How old were you then?

Rose: I was fifteen, just under sixteen. I was a member of the Free German Youth and had taken part in its activities. That was why I was sentenced.

Reporter: In 1958, when you were 21, you were acquitted after being charged with "endangering the state". The prosecution appealed against the acquittal, and in 1959 you were sentenced to nine months. What was your offence?

Rose: Firstly I had spoken in 1955 at the Hanover Youth Forum, a municipal enterprise, on my four weeks imprisonment. Secondly I had sent letters to a girl member of the Free German Youth who was in Hanover prison. Thirdly, I had taken part in the Youth Festivals in Moscow in 1957 and in Vienna in 1959. Fourthly I had spoken with Herr Ulbricht at a congress in 1955.

Reporter: A newspaper even published a photograph of Klaus Rose in conversation with Walter Ulbricht; it is scarcely a general practice to establish "treasonable relations" in the full light of publicity.

Herr Pievow, you are headmaster of a school here in Hanover, and you run the Youth Forum. Do you know Klaus Rose?

(Herr Pievow said that the Youth Forum had asked Klaus Rose to find speakers who could present the point of view of the Socialist Unity Party of the GDR. Rose had helped to find such speakers.)

Reporter: In 1959 the court sentenced Klaus Rose to nine months imprisonment. He did not need to serve the sentence, but was put on probation for three years.. On June 18th this year, 17 months after the probation period had expired, the court ordered him to serve the sentence, because he had broken the terms of probation. Herr Rose has now filed an appeal on constitutional grounds. Why, Herr Rose?

Rose: For the past seven years I have been working part-time as press photographer. In 1962 the youth magazine "Elan" commissioned me to make photographs at the Helsinki Youth Festival. I carried out this commission, and as a result the Lüneburg Provincial Court has cancelled my probation and ordered me to serve the sentence.

Reporter: Here is a copy of the magazine which published the pictures. Incidentally about 700 young people from all sorts of organisations in the Federal Republic attended the Helsinki Festival.

Professor Abendroth, you hold the Chair of Political Science at Marburg University, and you are an expert on constitutional law. How do you assess Herr Rose's constitutional appeal?

Abendroth: I think it is justified. This court decision offends against two articles of the Constitution — Article 12, which provides for liberty in the choice of profession, and Article 5, which provides for press freedom. The original sentence in 1959 was in accordance with the rulings of the Supreme Court at that time, but since then the Supreme Court has realised that some of its early decisions were not in accordance with democratic ideals. But the main thing to remember is this: The GDR, in connection with its 15th anniversary, released thousands of prisoners, including many political prisoners. The GDR has begun to modify its terrorist political justice. Should we endanger the process which is beginning over there by acting illiberally ourselves?

Reporter: Such sentences are based upon legislation for the protection of the state passed in a great hurry by the Federal Parliament in 1951; both lawyers and politicians have complained for a long time about the unclear definitions in this legislation. This, together with the banning of the Communist Party in 1956, and the sometimes rigorous methods used by the political police, have produced in practice a state of political persecution which endangers the constitutional rights of all citizens, even including lawyers, such as the Hanover lawyer Heinz Nölke.

Herr Nölke, you have often appeared for the defence in political cases. Were you ever a member of the Communist Party?

Nölke: No.

Reporter: Have you ever done anything which might be described as subversion of the democratic basic order of the Federal Republic?

Nölke: Obviously the political police think I have, since it has very often been reported to me that when the police search the houses of accused persons or their familes, they seize any piece of paper with my name on it. There is surely no need to confiscate letters in which I inform the family that I have visited the accused in prison, or inform a wife that her husband has been arrested and would like her to send him some clothes; but just such letters have been seized. A public prosecutor even travelled specially 200 kilometres to ask an arrested man why he had selected me as his lawyer.

Reporter: But everyone should have the right to select his legal representative freely.

Nölke: That is true, but there are political courts which draw prejudicial conclusions when an accused selects a certain lawyer.

Reporter: Could you give us details?

Nölke: Yes, there was for instance the case of an accused in Lüneburg where the court stated in its written judgement that it had been taken into account against him that he had a specific defence lawyer — me. The Federal Court, however, corrected this astonishing attitude on the part of the Lüneburg Provincial Court.

Reporter: After this conversation with lawyer Heinz Nölke I visited another lawyer who has just taken over the defence for the first time in a political case. Since he was afraid that it might be prejudicial for his client he did not wish to appear on the screen to tell you that his client had been asked officially in the course of interrogation how he came to select this lawyer to represent him.

These cases are clear attempts to intimidate both the accused and the lawyers; they are a threat to the right to select a lawyer of one's choice. The prosecution of members of the Communist Party has led to methods of investigation and evalu-

ation of evidence which threaten to overthrow the basis of legality. It is shocking how easy it is for somebody in our state to fall under police suspicion, even if he never had anything to do with the Communist Party; and it is shocking how difficult it is to get rid of this suspicion; and it is shocking how inevitable the results are. I have travelled through our state, and it was quite easy to find examples.

My first example is the case of Otto Hanisch. Police Sergeant Hanisch had been a member of the police force in Aachen for 17 years when he suddenly found himself confronted in summer 1962 with an investigation of suspicion that he had committed a political offence. On August 2nd 1962 Otto Hanisch was interrogated in his own police station on this suspicion, and police officials went to his house at the same time.

What happened here in your home, Frau Hanisch?

Frau Hanisch: That afternoon two detectives rang the bell, showed their identity cards, and said they had to search the apartment. They had no search warrant, but we had nothing to hide, and I could not imagine what they could be looking for, so I allowed them to search.

Reporter: Did they find anything?

Frau Hanisch: They found nothing, and because of this, I suppose, they took with them my 14-year-old son, who had just come in from play. They took him with them, dirty as he was.

Reporter: Did you not protest?

Frau Hanisch: How should I protest, everything happened so suddenly. They did not even ask me if I agreed; they just said they had to take Wolfgang with them.

Reporter: Did your husband make a protest?

Frau Hanisch: Yes of course, when he came home in the evening he asked why I had allowed it, and said he had made a protest. But they did not ask me, they just took the boy with them.

Reporter: Did they warn your son that he was going to be examined in a case against his father, and that he had the right to refuse to testify?

Frau Hanisch: No, after waiting for half an hour in the police station he was just taken in and questioned. They did not give him any warning.

Reporter: Herr Hanisch, what is your offence which made it possible for your family to be bullied by the political police in such a manner?

Hanisch: In summer 1962 I visited my sick mother at Nauen in the German Democratic Republic. Earlier I had made two journeys to Nauen with the permission of my office. I intended to apply for permission for the third journey post facto; I was on holiday, and could not get prior permission. When I returned to my police station I was interrogated for over six hours by officials of the political police.

Reporter: What crimes were you accused of, Herr Hanisch?

Hanisch: The police authorities had obviously received an anonymous letter accusing me of treasonable connections and treasonable espionage activities. I insisted that I be informed of the contents of the letter, otherwise I would utilise my right to refuse to make a statement. The interrogating officials immediately concluded that I was a Communist since, as they told the court later, they had learned at police college that it was possible to recognise Communists by the fact that they refused to make statements to the police. Another point in the accusation was based upon a report I had submitted to my superiors in 1959 after I had made my second journey to visit my mother in Nauen.

Reporter: This report of yours was later quoted in the written verdict of the court. You had written: "My holiday in the Soviet Occupation Zone passed without any special events. My treatment by the officials there, both by entry and exit and at the registration office was polite and correct. I was not personally endangered in any way. Possession of a visitor's permit ensures free entry to and exit from the Soviet Occupation Zone." Herr Hanisch, what sort of punishable activity is this report supposed to represent?

Hanisch: It is regarded as Communist propaganda.

Reporter: Is it correct that you were found not guilty on all counts by the Cologne Court on September 23rd 1963?

Hanisch: That is correct, and my confidence in the Federal Republic as a state of law was restored by the trial, a confidence which had previously been shattered by the methods of the political police in Aachen. But now, since the charges were filed, I have been suspended from duty, and receive only ¾ pay.

Some of Bonn's Political Prisoners

Here are some details of some of the hundreds of men and women at present serving prison sentences in West Germany for "political offences":

Herta Dürrbeck, aged 50, serving a 10-month sentence in Lingen Prison. She was sentenced retrospectively for her activity in the Democratic Women's League before it was banned in 1957. One of the "incriminating" items cited in the indictment was that "she already struggled in her youth for a Communist social system, and did not abandon these aims despite her imprisonment". The reference was to the fact that she was sentenced to imprisonment by the nazis in 1934.

Emmi Meyer, aged 51, serving a 10-month sentence in Vechta Prison. Grounds for the sentence were the same as in the case of Herta Dürrbeck. One of the incriminating items in the indictment stated: "At a meeting of the board of the Democratic Women's League in 1954 (three years before it was banned, ed.) she spoke in favour of a bill which should be introduced in parliament laying down equal rights for men and women".

Ernst Wiechmann, aged 61, serving a 12-month sentence in Oldenburg Prison. For 14 years elected trade union official in Continental Rubber Works, Hanover. Sentenced for attempting to stand as independent candidate for West German Parliament in 1961. The court regarded this as "attempting to implement the aims" of the banned Communist Party.

Fritz Maiwald, aged 48, serving a 12-month sentence in Oldenburg Prison. Former Social Democrat, for 7 years elected trade union official in Accumulator Works, Hanover. Sentenced on same grounds as Ernst Wiechmann (above).

Wenzel Pöschel, aged 60, serving a 12-month sentence in Oldenburg Prison. Sentenced for contributing to election fund for independent parliamentary candidates. Served seven years in nazi Buchenwald concentration Camp.

Georg Jacobi, aged 44, serving a 3½ year sentence in Münster Prison for "political activities furthering the aims of the banned Communist Party".

Since the prosecuting authorities have appealed against the sentence I have no idea how and when the whole affair will end.

Reporter: The appeal application filed by the public prosecutor in Cologne is filled with statements which are a threat to all of us. Here is an extract:

"Any statement which accords with the agitational aims of the banned Communist Party is objectively an offence against the ban on the Communist Party. Coincidence in modes of thought with the political aims of the party is sufficient. The accused has given support to the 'three-state theory' by saying that the frontier and the Berlin Wall are facts which cannot be changed either by repeatedly pointing to these facts, or by force. The public prosecutor concludes therefrom that he regards Berlin as belonging to the Soviet Occupation Zone, thus discussing and approving one of the main present aims of the Communist Party/Socialist Unity Party. The accused has stated that only those who have been there can talk about the reconstruction and other affairs in the Soviet Zone. This is one of the contemporary propaganda slogans of the illegal Communist Party and the Socialist Unity Party, which state: 'Come here and see for yourselves'. In the court hearing the accused asked why the Communist Party was banned in the Federal Republic; the Communist Party was legal in France. Such a remark is equivalent to the demand to cancel the ban on the Communist Party."

But this demand, which is classified in this document as something endangering the state, has been publicly raised by prominent politicians recently. But I do not intend to scare you with further extracts — I say scare, because this is no laughing matter. Those extracts I read you were not from the manuscript of a political revue, but from a legal document drawn up by a prominent public prosecutor.

Not every judge might be ready to agree with arguments of this kind, but such insinuations and accusations are quite sufficient for the opening of an official investigation.

In the course of such an investigation two officials of the political police visited a factory in Hanover on April 18th last year. They had with them a magistrate's authorisation to search the place of work of the laboratory worker Fräulein Ute Diegel, aged 19. The chairman of the trade union branch in the factory feared unpleasant results if he was interviewed on the matter, so I asked Ute Diegel herself. What happened?

Diegel: The officials searched my place of work and confiscated two private letters which I had intended to post that day, and a copy of the "Communist Manifesto". Then I was taken to the police station, where they photographed me and took my fingerprints. Then they took me home, where they conducted another search, confiscating a number of picture-postcards I had brought with me from Helsinki, and an illustrated book on Ravensbrück, the nazi concentration camp for women.

Reporter: What reason can there have been for these searches? Were you ever a member of a banned organisation like the Free German Youth or the Communist Party?

Diegel: No.

Reporter: But you are a member of the Association of Nazi Persecutees (VVN). Why?

Diegel: I am a member of the VVN because my parents were both resistance fighters. My father was member of a Social Democratic resistance group and was imprisoned for four years; he died in 1946 as the result of his imprisonment.

Reporter: You have been informed that the investigation against you was closed at the beginning of this year?

Diegel: Yes, the investigation has been closed. But before that happened I had been dismissed by the firm for which I worked, because of the police search there. I appealed to the labour tribunal against my dismissal, and was represented by my trade union. The appeal was dismissed.

Reporter: What can have been the serious suspicion in the case of Ute Diegel which justified the investigation and the searches? The public prosecutor in Lüneburg informs us that the measures were approved in advance by the relevant court, and that the confiscation of incriminating material had been subsequently confirmed.

What sort of "incriminating material" is a copy of the "Communist Manifesto", written by Marx and Engels in 1848, and a book about Ravensbrück concentration camp? The public prosecutor was not able to inform us of details of the serious suspicions which led to the investigation. He stated that the investigations in the case of Fräulein Diegel were only part of a big investigation involving many persons; in the case of one of these persons charges have been lodged. Further discussion would only be prejudicial to other persons involved, stated the public prosecutor.

Does this public prosecutor really not know that even preliminary investigations are prejudicial to those involved? How many such investigations in affairs affecting the security of the state were carried out in the Federal Republic? Defence counsel in political cases estimate between 20,000 and 50,000. Official statistics on this subject have never hitherto been published. In the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (the West German FBI, ed), I finally managed to obtain figures on the investigations conducted against right-wing radicals (neo-nazis, ed.). The figure was exactly 177. After long insistence the Federal Ministry of Justice in Bonn gave the figure of 10,000 as the total for political police investigations in 1963. We have already seen in the case of Fräulein Diegel that a single investigation may be aimed at a number of people; we may therefore conclude that the figure of between 20,000 and 50,000 given by defence lawyers is correct; this is the number of persons implicated.

One of the people implicated in 1963 was Klaus Marwitz, who works in the building department of the municipality of Langenhagen near Hanover. He had come under suspicion because he had visited East Berlin, and had left behind there "important espionage material": this material consisted of a street map of Langenhagen which can be purchased at any newsagents in the town. I

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asked Herr Marwitz what the result of the official investigation against him had been.

Marwitz: The investigations showed my innocence, and were closed.

Reporter: Undoubtedly the investigations damaged your reputation. Were there any other negative effects?

Marwitz: This is hard to say exactly. The fact is that I visited East Berlin in 1961, and that I was denounced to the authorities two years later, just at the time I was competing for an elective official post.

Reporter: Were you elected?

Marwitz: No.

Reporter: You filed claims for false accusation and slander. These cases have been quashed. Do you know why?

Marwitz: Yes, the public prosecutor told me, and I quote: "The originators of the report cannot be identified".

Reporter: That means that it must have been either an anonymous denunciation, or so-called "confidential informants", whose names may not be disclosed.

Marwitz: It is officially stated that it was an informer. But I must call them denunciators, and that is really the oppressive part, that the public prosecutor encourages such denunciation, since his letter states: "Insofar as the action of the unknown informant may be regarded as slanderous, this is not actionable, since the information was given in the interest of the state and is therefore justified under paragraph 193 of the Criminal Court Code."

Reporter: The public prosecutor actually wrote Criminal Court Code in his letter, although he was referring to paragraph 193 of the Criminal Code which defines "public interest", which is here identified with "state interest". Denunciators are therefore ensured freedom from prosecution, and that is bad enough. What is really catastrophic, however, is the ruling legislation in cases "affecting the security of the state". I interviewed Senator Kramer, who represents Hamburg with the Federal Government. You have been for many years a prosecutor general, and are fully acquainted with the problems – we might better say excesses – of our political justice. Can things remain as they are?

Kramer: I am convinced that they cannot remain as they are today. In a legally-run state anybody who is punished must be found guilty of an exactly defined offence.

(Senator Kramer then cited the very precise definition of "theft" in the German Criminal Code as an example. Offences against the security of the state were tried today under legislation which did not exactly define the offences.)

I am of the opinion that these laws, the so-called "Lightning Laws", which were passed by parliament in 1951 at the high point of the war in Korea, urgently need thorough rewriting.

Kogon: ... It is now up to the legislators to work over the legal paragraphs, and make them absolutely clear, something that should have been done in the first place. In addition I believe that it is necessary to clear up, by means of an amnesty, old sentences which we can consider today neither legally nor politically correct, sentences which are a millstone round our necks.

UN Seats for German States?

The two German states and the special territory of West Berlin should be accepted as members of the United Nations, GDR Foreign Minister Lothar Bolz stated in a foreign policy speech to the People's Chamber on November 19th. "This would be a step forward in the process of bringing together the German states" he said.

Foreign Minister Bolz pointed out that the German Democratic Republic was a sovereign peaceable state under the definition of Article 4 of the United Nation's Charter, and that it was ready and willing to accept the reponsibilities of membership.

"Our Republic has done more to help the fruitful work of UN than some nations which are members" he said. "The time has come to put into practice the principle of universality in the United Nations. The present infringement of the principle of universality is a left-over of the cold war period, something which must be overcome."

He criticised the fact that the two German states today receive unequal treatment from the United Nations; this is mainly expressed in the fact that West Germany, while not a member of the UN, is allowed to maintain an official "observer" delegation in New York, and enjoys full membership in various UN sub-organisations.

"The present unequal treatment of the two German states has never been approved either by the General Assembly nor by the Security Council, and is solely the result of an unjustified ruling by the former Secretariat; it is a bad heritage which should be rejected by the present UN Secretariat. The activities of the West German 'observer' are illegal as long as the GDR has no official position at the UN.

"With regard to the specialised organisations, the German Federal Republic argues that GDR membership in these organisations would cement the partitioning of Germany. For ten years West Germany has been a member of these organisations, and the GDR has been illegally excluded, but this has not led to a single step in the direction of German reunification. Whether the members of these organisations desire it or not, sole West German membership has simply strengthened the West German illusion that its policy of overthrowing the GDR has some prospects of success. This endangers the peace of Europe and is an obstacle to a peaceful solution of the German question."

Turning to the question of international recognition of the German Democratic Republic, Foreign Minister Bolz stated: "We are ready and willing to establish diplomatic relations with all capitalist states, including the NATO states. If capitalist countries believe that this aim should only be approached step by step, then we are also agreeable. We believe that it should be just as possible for our Republic to establish trade missions in London, Paris, Brussels and Rome as it is for West Germany to establish such missions in Warsaw, Budapest, Bucharest and Sofia."

Krupp on Stage?

" ... (recent West German plays have shown) an intense interest in the documentary records of recent history ...

"In the interests of expanding the new documentary theatre we suggest a few more subjects: the transcript of the Nuremberg trials, for one; a dramatisation of 'Mein Kampf' for another."

"Finally, perhaps, we might have a chronicle play about Alfred Krupp called 'How I Made Millions on Slave Labor, Beat the Rap and Became a Great Democratic Statesman of Industry'. The title may be a little long. But then, so is the story."

("Washington Star", November 17th 1964)

LABOUR PARTY & MLF

By Konni Zilliacus, M. P.

The crisis of NATO presents our new-born Labour Government with a dazzling opportunity and a fateful choice. The crisis is due to American attempts to appease the West German demand for equality of rights in the military alliance (NATO). West Germany has already become the strongest military power in terms of land forces next to the Americans in NATO, and is now claiming the right to arm the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons.

The American administration is committed to trying to satisfy this demand by the proposal for a multilateral mixed manned fleet in which Germany would share on equal terms with the other European allies, and the United States would retain her veto on the use by the fleet of the Polaris missiles she had provided.

What Wilson Said

Harold Wilson has twice, on January 31st and July 3rd, 1963, declared Labour's total opposition to this scheme, on the ground that so far from appeasing it would whet German nuclear appetites, for the Bonn Government did not believe the American veto in the MLF could last and regarded the whole scheme as a halfway house to Germany possessing nuclear weapons of her own. But Wilson said on July 3rd: "... We are completely, utterly and unequivocally opposed now and in all circumstances to any suggestion that Germany, West Germany or East Germany, directly or indirectly, should have a finger on the nuclear trigger or any responsibility, direct or indirect, for deciding that nuclear weapons are to be used." ...

There is now a Labour Government pledged to the hilt, with the overwhelming support of the party and of public opinion, to reject any form of international nuclear force including Western Germany, and further pledged (1) to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, and (2) to establish nuclear-free zones in Africa, Latin America and Central Europe. (These two points are taken from Labour's election manifesto.)

The European allies, starting with the Social Democratic Governments in Norway and Denmark, M. Spaak, the Belgian Prime Minister, and the Dutch Government, and ending with the Left-Centre coalition in Italy, are all opposed to the MLF for the same reasons as Labour, but are waiting for a lead from the Labour Government...

This is Labour's dazzling opportunity. It in turn compels the Government to make a fateful choice: according to most of our press and reports in American newspapers, the Labour Government is alleged to be toying with the idea, which the Americans would graciously accept, of some new variant of the MLF scheme in the shape of a small mixed-manned multilateral Polaris fleet (eight or nine instead of 25 vessels) plus national contingents of land, sea and air nuclear forces under NATO command — all including West German participation. This force would be controlled by an American veto and by a collective veto lodged in a majority or qualified majority of the European members of NATO.

This would be a Heath Robinson contraption for Britain signing on as tail-end Charlie in an American nuclear bomber with a German co-pilot, in order to qualify for annihilation without representation. It would, of course, have the same fatal results on any prospect for an agreement with the Russians about stopping the spread of nuclear weapons, or disengagement and the creation of nuclear-free zones, as the original scheme. It would in fact plunge us into a new round of the cold war, intensify the arms race, and step up our defence expenditure to the point where Labour would find it impossible to keep its social and economic promises to the people. And it would have devastating repercussions on party unity.

Reason Banished

The whole scheme in fact illustrates what Wilson meant in his speech of January 31st last year when he said that: "When defence becomes the master of foreign policy, as it sometimes has in recent years, faith and reason alike are banished from our councils."

Fortunately Labour has emphatically repudiated that principle. For us, in Denis Healey's words in the House on March 4th, 1963, "The first principle of defence is that defence should be the servant of foreign and colonial policy."

In his first speech as "Shadow" Foreign Secretary Harold Wilson, on December 31st, 1961, said: "From now on instead of putting defence first in our minds — weapons and means of destruction — I think the important thing is to put foreign policy, particularly a Socialist foreign policy, first. Then all other things will fall into place."

If our leaders have the courage of the party's convictions and are heedful of the national objection, so often voiced by themselves, to being "pushed around", let them now use the Labour Government's overwhelmingly strong bargaining position to speak in words like these to the Americans and our other allies:

"We refuse to take part in any attempts to strengthen the alliance, until we have sat down at the conference table with the Soviet Government and found out whether we can settle outstanding issues by negotiation and compromise, and make a serious start with disarmament. We question the necessity for these vast war preparations. We also draw attention to the fact that since NATO may be lawfully invoked only in cases of 'unprovoked aggression' we cannot be committed to war by allies who fail to agree with us on how to make peace and pursue policies which we regard as provocative — and an international nuclear force in any form is in our view such a policy.

Bases Should Go

"If, after a reasonable time and in spite of our best efforts, we cannot reach a basis of negotiations with the Soviet Union acceptable to our allies and ourselves, we shall start removing the American bases from this country, pulling our forces out of Germany, and exploring with the Russians on our own the possibility of reaching agreement on issues dividing us."

That is tough talk. But we shall be within our rights, and it is about time someone got tough in the cause of peace and not only for the sake of differing views about more preparations for nuclear war. If it took that line, the Labour Government would have such an all-powerful bargaining position and such tremendous support from the uncommitted nations, the rest of the Commonwealth and public opinion in Western Europe, Germany and the United States, that we should carry the day.

(condensed from "Tribune", London, November 13th)

Go East, Madonna

The Sixtine Madonna by Raphael, great old master, which is on permanent exhibition in the Dresden Art Gallery in the GDR, will be loaned to Japan next year, it was announced in Berlin.

This will not be the first foreign journey undertaken by this famous picture. Buried in a slate-mine to save it from war-time raids, the picture was discovered by the Red Army and taken to Moscow for restoration. It was returned to the GDR, together with many other art treasures, in 1955.

Many of the valuable pictures of the Dresden collection disappeared in the chaotic post-war days. A large part of the missing works have been tracked down, one at a London auction, and returned to Dresden, but others are still missing. The GDR authorities will shortly issue a series of stamps with pictures of the missing treasures, in the hope that wide circulation will lead to their location. Similar "wanted" stamps issued by the French postal authorities some years ago are reported to have brought missing pictures to light.

Brecht Goes West

The Berliner Ensemble, leading theatre of the German Democratic Republic, and one of the finest in the world, will visit Britain in August 1965 for three weeks of guest performances in London and Edinburgh, it was announced in Berlin.

The Berliner Ensemble was founded by Bertolt Brecht, and has been run since his death in 1956 by his widow, actress Helene Weigel. The plays to be presented in Britain will include "Arturo Ui" and "The Threepenny Opera" by Brecht, and "Coriolanus", Brecht's adaptation of Shakespeare's classic.

The famous East Berlin theatre group has frequently been invited to Britain, but hitherto visas have been refused by the British authorities.

Liebknecht's Widow Dies

Sophie Liebknecht, widow of German working-class leader Karl Liebknecht, died in Moscow on November 11th at the age of 80. Karl Liebknecht, one of the founders of the German Communist Party, was murdered by reactionary officers in Berlin in January 1919. His widow, forced to leave Germany when the nazis came to power, emigrated to the Soviet Union, where she lived until her death.

DOUBLE CROSS

General Heinz Trettner, Inspector General of the West German Armed Forces, was decorated in Washington on November 10th with the US Legion of Merit, the highest American decoration awarded to foreigners. The citation stated that he had received the award for "outstanding service to his native country and NATO". General Trettner now has two crosses to hang round his neck: the first is the "Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross", second-highest nazi decoration, which he was awarded twenty years earlier, in September 1944, by Hitler, just after he had been promoted to Major General in the Wehrmacht. In the Second World War Trettner helped plan the abortive nazi invasion of Britain, fought on the eastern front, and commanded "police actions" in northern Italy in 1944 in the course of which villages were burned down and civilian hostages murdered. Earlier he served in the Condor Legion which fought for Franco in Spain.

Nazi Criminals Go Scot-Free

All nazi criminals identified after May 1965 will go scot-free in West Germany, and no proceedings will be taken against them, the West German Minister of Justice, Ewald Bucher, announced on November 13th. A number of trials of criminals can be expected after that date because legal proceedings have already been initiated.

The West German ruling means that Chancellor Erhard's Government has decided to ignore requests from home and abroad to suspend the statute of limitations, which lays down that persons may not be tried for murder more than 20 years after the commission of the offence. In the case of nazi criminals this 20-year period has run from May 1945, when the nazi regime was overthrown.

The German Democratic Republic and a number of socialist countries have passed special laws suspending the operation of the statute of limitations in respect to nazi criminals on the grounds that their crimes were of a nature which cannot be dealt with by normal legal standards.

Some idea of the number of nazi criminals who will avoid any punishment for their crimes as a result of the West German decision is given by the fact that the Polish Government announced on November 12th that some 10,000 nazis listed on Polish war crimes lists have not been located or tried. Many of the men named are probably dead, but several thousands are believed to be at large in West Germany.

Dr Joachim Prinz, President of the American Jewish Congress, stated on November 14th that the West German decision to stop prosecutions of nazi criminals was "a callous affront to world opinion. The passage of 20 years must not be allowed to exonerate acts of the magnitude of evil of nazism's crimes against humanity." Dr Prinz criticised "the incredible leniency of many of the sentences imposed" in recent West German war crimes trials.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

British visitors to East Berlin have been tickled in the past week or two by rather striking posters on hoardings all over the city showing a formalised open book, and above it the one short word "Lies".

First fleeting impressions that the posters might be the work of a well-organised anti-book underground are dispelled when you read the small print on the poster and discover that it is publicity for "Book Week". The word "Lies", which looks so strange to the English eye, is simply the imperative form of the German verb "lesen", meaning to read. The only strange thing about the posters, in fact, is that it should be thought necessary to popularise book reading, since the rate of book consumption in the GDR is well up amongst the top ten in the world. As a visitor from London remarked, it is rather like running a campaign in Britain to drink more tea. The same visitor remarked that one of the reasons for the high rate of GDR book reading may be due to the less-than-exciting fare provided by the GDR press, but we shall let that pass.

Snappy Slogans

For my part I must say I greet the trend towards shorter slogans shown in the poster, and you can't get much lower than four letters. It makes a welcome change from some of the snappy slogans bandied about in the GDR. Here is a genuine specimen, culled from the slogans coined, or perhaps evolved, for the 15th anniversary of the foundation of the GDR: "Greetings and thanks to the industrial workers! You are making the 15th Anniversary a high-point in socialist emulation! Set yourselves new and higher targets in the struggle for the technical-scientific highest standard, highest quality, lowest costs and the world-market-saleability of your products!"

The man who thought that one out should consider the world-market-saleability of his product.

But to get back to the unfortunate question of the world-misunderstandability of a word which means one thing in one language, and something quite different in another. As I noted some years ago, a GDR cigarette firm began happily marketing a cigarette named "Muck". It was named after a German fairy-story character, and the word has no derogatory implications in German. Cigarette shops in East Berlin were baffled when British visitors insisted on buying packets to take home with them.

There is also, I am glad to say, a brisk sale to ribald visitors of the newspaper of the railway trade union which is called "Fahrt Frei".

And to conclude this short listing, I have several times seen British officers from the occupation forces in West Berlin, who like to buy brightly coloured wooden toys in East Berlin, busily scratching the labels bearing the Chatterley-like name of the firm from the bottom of their purchases.

Xmas Flood

Christmas is just around the corner, and I am bracing myself not only for the flood of Christmas carols which will start pouring out in a few days from the radio stations of the GDR, but also for the never-failing flood of stories in western newspapers suggesting that Christmas, or at least Christmas trees, are banned in the GDR. Such stories are a hardy annual, though in recent years they have not been quite so wild and woolly, and have sometimes consisted of the "he-has-stopped-beating-his-wife" version, suggesting that Christmas is not being wiped out in the GDR in the current year quite so fiercely as it was in the past.

I first dealt with the "Christmas is banned" story in Berlin Notebook on December 5th 1952, stating: "The British and American press have always chosen the Christmas period as an opportunity for launching some particularly absurd lies about East Germany".

Norm Fulfilled

Four weeks later, on January 2nd, I was wearily noting that western papers had fulfilled expectations and reported that GDR radio stations had banned carols. A glance at the radio programme showed that over the three days of Christmas there had been a total of 25 exclusively traditional Christmas programmes, ranging from lashings of carols to Christmas poetry and concerts.

In succeeding years I put in a short prophylactic note about The Case of the Censored Christmas. I had a few lines to fill in the Notebook, and suggested one year, in a jaundiced mood, that I personally would not mind much if somebody did in fact ban Christmas songs ranging from "Silent Night" to "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas" which blanket radio here from early December.

Sometime about 1959 an American newspaper printed a blood-curdling piece about Communist Party functionaries being forced to smuggle Christmas trees into their homes, because they would be expelled from the Party if they were seen doing anything so deviationist; I had intended to re-print it, but it must have been crowded out. The tiny grain of truth in this story is that functionaries and others do in fact smuggle Christmas trees into their homes, and then hide them, the reason being that small children in Germany believe that the decorated Christmas tree, already blazing with candles, is magicked into the room on Christmas Eve, and the illusion would be spoiled if they saw Dad staggering into the apartment a few days earlier with the tree in all its original nakedness.

Quit Catacombs

On January 11th 1963 Berlin Notebook was able to reprint part of an article by Lajos Lederer in the London "Observer" which was a fine specimen of the "Christmas is no longer banned" school. Mr Lederer wrote:

"Party directives have been issued to make it quite clear that Christmas can be freely celebrated... For the first time for many years Christmas music and concerts of church bells will be allowed, and church services will be broadcast."

The East Berlin daily "Neue Zeit", organ of the GDR Christian Democratic Union, one of the five political parties here, gave the best answer to Lederer's drivel, writing on December 24th:

"Hurrah! Now we can emerge from our coal cellars; the Christmas service will be held in the church. And we can dig our Bibles and hymnals from the holes where we buried them."

But to be serious for a moment: Christmas will be celebrated in the GDR in much the same way as in any other country with a mainly Protestant tradition. It is a time for feasting and giving presents to children. The 10% or 15% of the population who want to do so will attend church services; for the vast majority of the population in the GDR as in Britain, for instance, Christmas is a secular holiday.

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet. Democratic German Report, Krausenstrasse 9, 108 Berlin, Telephone 22 29 68. Printed in Germany by (204). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 beim Presseamt des Ministerpräsidenten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik.

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